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ABSTRACT

This study examined the social competency of at-risk kindergarten students as they demonstrated the need to establish social communities in order to increase group motivation and peer learning. The study explores the patterns of behaviors that these children demonstrate in order to form social communities, explores the purpose behind their need to establish such communities, and explores the teacher's agenda as it relates to the agenda of social group formation. Subjects were seven children enrolled in a developmental kindergarten. Classroom academic lessons and social interactions were videotaped. Analysis indicated that at-risk kindergarten students must establish social communities within groups of peers in order to feel secure in an instructional setting. In forming social communities, problems may occur for at-risk students who may be viewed by the teacher as being off-task or noncompliant. It is concluded that formed and sustained communities enable the children to monitor the teacher's behavior in order to receive feedback. Teachers are advised to balance their need for successful lesson completion with their students' need to feel a sense of security. (Contains 20 references.) (JDD)

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The Hidden Agenda: The Need for At-Risk Kindergarten Students To Establish Social Communities During a Formal Reading Lesson

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Abstract

At-risk kindergarten students demonstrate the need to form social groups in an instructional reading group in order to promote group motivation and peer learning. Cosaro (1985) demonstrated that children attempt many entries into a group in order to become part of a social unit. Group cohesion created through the successful establishment of a social community, gives the children who comprise that group a sense of belonging. Because at-risk or exceptional children are often viewed as being deficient in social skills. They are often thought of as lacking the social competency that is needed to sucessfully initiate a social interaction. Examination of the social interactions that occur in their special education and mainstreamed classrooms as a means of social group formation behaviors may be misinterpreted as oppositional.

The Hidden Agenda: The Need for At-Risk Kindergarten Students to Form Social Communities During an Formal Reading Lesson.

The importance of early social community formation has been demonstrated by the attempts of preschool students who continued to try to gain entry into a social group even though their prior attempts had proven to be unsuccessful (Cosaro, 1985). Peer members must see an outsider as a potential peer before group entry is allowed. Self-categorization is the process where members in a group demonstrate biased behavior toward individuals who are not perceived as suitable group members (Turner, 1987). The importance of successful group entry can be seen in a child's later academic and social life. Studies have demonstrated that students who were unable to successfully form social communities within the classroom developed later social and behavioral problems as well (Anand, 1975). For at-risk kindergarten students, their need to develop social communities within an academic setting, may assist them in their need for security. In addition, through the formation of social communities, less anxiety may create a classroom atmosphere that is more conducive to learning (Gazda, 1971). The importance of forming social communities has

been observed and documented with preschool children as young as three years of age (Cosaro, 1985). Children learn to establish social communities by choosing friends who have similar goals and interest (Hartup, 1985; Pomeroy & Johnson, 1983). In addition, references to the social community are often stated through verbal or nonverbal behaviors (Bergin, 1989; Cosaro, 1985). These verbal and nonverbal references allow children to create temporary friendships with several peers. The ability to create temporary friendships is important because social communities that occur between children are not always self-sustaining (Cosaro, 1985). Yet, children still need to feel part of a social group even if the establishment of that group is only temporary in nature (Gottman, 1983; Rubin, 1980). By creating and possibly maintaining friendship with several peers, a child will have more opportunities for entry into a new social territory. In addition, through the creation of small groups comes the development of shared compatibility, mutual assurance and a sense of belonging (Cosaro, 1985).

Past studies that have examined group cohesiveness have determined that group cohesion is demonstrated by the influence each individual member has on the other

peers in the group. Thus, group cohesion is facilitated through a feeling of togetherness and mutual trust (Hart, 1974). In addition, a group's perceived cohesion is conveyed by how the other group members view themselves in relationship to the other peers in the group. Being able to address this relationship enables a group member to determine his contribution to the cohesiveness within a group. In addition, this enables an individual to judge his sense of belonging to his fellow peers.

A group's feeling of cohesiveness can appear at two domains. The first is cognitive. An individual's perceived cohesiveness is judged by past encounters with individuals within the group as well as the group itself. These past encounters serve as substantiated proof of a prior cohesive relationship. The second is affective. An individual's perceived cohesive relationship is judged by feelings that demonstrate a past examination of encounters with individual in the group as well as the group itself. The importance of group cohesion can be seen in the classroom. Research has demonstrated that students who have formed cohesive units appear to be more motivated to learn (Gazda, 1971). In addition, feelings of increased self-esteem can occur due to a student being associated with a cohesive unit of peers.

This is demonstrated when a member is reinforced for interacting with another member in his group. That interaction leads to other reciprocal interactions and in time, a strong bond is created between group members (Bollen & Hoyle, 1990). The strength of the perceived cohesiveness within a group is directly related to the group's projected longevity. Consequently, it is not surprising that group members will establish group norms, goals and ideals that will assist in sustaining group cohesiveness.

Past research (Strain & Odom, 1986; Strain & Timm, 1974) have examined social initiation patterns that occur between students in a special education classroom. These patterns were observed in order to determine techniques that would create more successful social initiation behaviors for those exceptional children. It was felt that these social initiation patterns needed to be learned in order for exceptional children to develop increased socially competent skills. This study wishes to argue that exceptional students are far more socially competent than previous studies have demonstrated. The social competence of exceptional students is demonstrated by their attempts to form social communities in order to increase peer learning and group motivation during instructional

academic lessons.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the social competency of at-risk kindergarten students as they demonstrate the need to establish social communities in order to increase group motivation and peer learning. This article wishes to accomplish the following goals:

1. To explore the patterns of behaviors that at-risk kindergarten students demonstrate in order to form social communities.
2. To explore the purpose behind at-risk kindergarten student's need to establish social communities.
3. To explore the teacher's agenda as it relates to the agenda of social group formation of at-risk kindergarten students.

Subjects

The subjects for this study were seven students who were enrolled in a developmental kindergarten. This classroom was in a private school setting (e. g., kindergarten through six) located in a Midwestern state. The community in which this school resided was middle class. Of the seven students observed, six were Caucasian and one was Biracial. The ratio of male to female students was three to four. The mean age for

these seven kindergarten students was six. The class size was small so that each student received more individual instruction, and lessons could be paced according to the student's social and academic needs. All seven students were termed "at-risk" due to cognitive, social or genetic related deficiencies. Two of the students had a Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and an Adjustment Disorder of Childhood. One student was identified as demonstrating Persuasive Developmental Disorders. Another student had social problems due to having parents from two different races; another student was born with a severe hearing impairment. The final two students had maturity problems due to difficulties in their past social life. The instructor for this classroom was a middle aged, self-assured Caucasian veteran who had a background in elementary and special education. In addition, she had eight years of teaching experience. While these children were not labeled as "special" students by the teacher, it is interesting to note that teachers from other regular classes would sometimes treat the children differently than the regular students when discipline problems occurred in the hallway.

Method

The following methods were used in order to examine how at-risk kindergarten children developed social groups during an instructional reading lesson. Reading lessons that occurred between the teacher and her students were videotaped over a four month period. Prior to videotaping the students, the researcher brought his video camcorder into the classroom and allowed the students the opportunity to look at it as well as operate it with assistance. Videotaping involved recording the social interactions that occurred before and after the actual reading lesson. Videotaping occurred over a three month period. Once patterns of social communities were discovered. Videotaping involved other academic and nonacademic lessons as well.

The total hours of collected unedited tape amounted to between twenty-five and thirty hours of classroom instruction. The importance of taping social interactions that occurred in this kindergarten classroom was as follows. Taping social interactions that lead to the actual reading activity enabled the researcher to see the verbal and nonverbal behaviors of the students and teachers prior to the actual reading lesson (Mehan, 1978; Miles & Huberman, 1984). This put the teacher/students

behaviors that were demonstrated during the reading lesson into a contextual framework that facilitated videotape interpretation (Bogdan & Lutfiyya, 1992).

Data pertaining to verbal and nonverbal behaviors of the teacher and students were also collected through transcription notes which were written after a lesson was videotaped. Transcription notes identified the verbal and nonverbal behaviors of both teacher and student (Erickson, 1992). Finally, after the videotaping of a reading lesson, fieldnotes were taken that nonjudgementally described the nonverbal and verbal behaviors that were occurring between the students and between the teacher and the students (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). These behaviors were indexed at a later time and were triangulated with videotape data, and reflective summations (Marshall & Rossman, 1989; Miles & Huberman, 1984).

Insert Table One

Three main categories became dominant in this study. The behaviors that at-risk students demonstrated the most during social community formation were either visual, verbal or gestural. Within each category, more explicit behaviors were determined and defined. Thus, within the

Table 1

Demonstrated Behaviors During Social Community Formation

Visual	Behavioral
1. Visual monitoring	1. Student focuses on student(s)
2. Eye contact	2. Student makes two peer eye contact
3. Facial Expression	3. Student looks and smiles at another student

Verbal	Behavioral
1. Uniform statements	1. S1/S2/S3: Animals too, sisters do, brothers too.
2. Agreement statements	2. S1: Me ! S2: Me !
3. Similar statements	3. S1: sisters too. S2: Sisters do.
4. Gender statements	4. S1: I want step brother. S2: sister. S3: Baby.
5. Person Commonality statements	5. S1 to S2: We both have sleeves.
6. Subject Commonality statements	6. S1: Fish in the sea. S2: Birds in the air.

Gestural	Behavioral
1. Physical touching	1. Student places his body part on another peer
2. Extension touching	2. Student touches a peer with a physical object
3. Mirroring movements	3. Student repeats gestural actions of another peer
4. Proximity movements	4. Student positions his body closer to another peer

visual category, there were three sub-categories. First was eye contact between two students. This eye contact if reciprocated might eventually lead to visual monitoring or to a specific facial expression. The verbal category consisted of six sub-categories. Uniform statements were statements in which two or more students stated the exact same phrase. Agreement statements were statements in which both students made the same comment. Similar statements were statements in which students made like comments. Gender statements were statements that separated students according to their sex role. Person commonality statements may have linked a similarity between two peers. But, subject commonality statements linked students through topic parallels. Finally, the gestural category contained four sub-groups. These sub-categories took the form of actions that demonstrated the need for a subject to physically link himself to another peer. This physical linkage could also occur through a proximity movement which lead to physical touching. This physical linkage could also occur through mirroring movements that enabled a student to display a near similar gesture in the hopes that his copied peer would be unconsciously flattered and thus would allow him to enter into a social community. This physical linkage could also occur

through extension touching where a student touches his peer with an object. Finally, this physical linkage could also occur through physical touching in which a student placed his body part on another peer.

Results

Demonstrated Patterns of At-Risk Kindergarten Students Which Facilitated the Establishment and Maintenance of Social Communities

This study will address the following issues: (1) patterns that at-risk kindergarten students demonstrated during social group formation, (2) the reason behind at-risk student's need to form social communities and (3) The varying agendas that occur between the teacher and her students during attempted social group formation.

This study determined that before a social community was established, a student had to demonstrate behaviors that allowed for the invitations into a social community to occur. Visual monitoring served as an invitation.

Invitations were often gestural, visual or verbal in nature. Gestural invitations involved touching another student or demonstrating physical proximity to another student. Visual invitations involved looking or smiling at another student briefly or sustaining eye contact for more that two seconds. Verbal invitations were statements that linked the subjects together or

addressed commonalties between two peers.

The establishment of a social community usually occurred through the visual monitoring of another peer. Visual monitoring enabled the student to see what behavior he had to attempt in order to establish group cohesion and enter into a sustained social community. Visual monitoring also lead to verbal or gestural monitoring. Verbal monitoring occurred when a student repeated what a peer said, made a statement that extended what a student had said or made a statement that demonstrated the existence of cohesion. Gestural monitoring involved repeating the actions of another student in a simultaneous manner or adding to the actions of another student. In addition, gestural monitoring behaviors lead to turn taking behaviors between the teacher and student. Turn taking allowed the teacher to monitor the student's responses and give appropriate feedback. In addition, turn taking allowed the students to monitor the teacher's feedback as well as the reinforcement feedback coming from group peers (Cazden, 1988).

A social community was also formed by the physical monitoring of another peer. This was demonstrated through proximity movements that were teacher or

student initiated. Teacher initiated student proximity movements were often unintentional. But, most teachers will try to seat students together based upon an applied assumption that this seating arrangement would not preclude student learning. Student initiated proximity movements occurred when the child temporarily determined his or her seating arrangement. The child changed seats in order to become physically closer to another peer. The need for at-risk students to establish social communities through proximity movements was made apparent in the following transcription.

Contextual Information: The kindergarten student's are getting ready for a reading lesson. They are placing their chairs in front of the reading table. The teacher has left the classroom temporarily to talk to another teacher.

* Underlined = male names. Non-underlined = female names.

Teacher		Student	
Nonverbal	Verbal	Nonverbal	Verbal
		1. J and W take their chairs and carry them to the left side of the room. S and K are sitting in their chairs. There is a space between them.	1. K: I ... put a spot right here ... You ... you can sit ...

		2. S extends her leg to the empty spot between herself and K.	2. K: B. you can sit by S. Ok ?

Contextual Information: Later when J and W move their chairs to the left. K and S restate their need for B to sit next to them.

Teacher		Student	
Nonverbal	Verbal	Nonverbal	Verbal
		3. K extends her arms in the space between herself and S. S extends her arm into the space as well. Their fingers touch	3 K: B, we're holding... Scoot down.
4. Teacher walks into the room.	4. Oh, I like the way J and S and K have their chairs ready for reading !	4. K extends her arm to S's chair. S moves her chair to the right. K moves her chair to the left.	

In this particular setting, prior to a reading lesson female students, K and S were attempting to establish social communities through the demonstration of gestural behaviors and eye contact. K and S strengthened their attempt to form a social community through proximity movements that allowed a space to be kept for B. These proximity movements took the form of arm movements that allowed a space to be kept for B.

The Purpose Behind the At-Risk Kindergarten Students Attempts to Form Social Communities

While a student demonstrated various behaviors to establish a social community, initial attempts to enter into a social community were not always proven to be successful. Children formed spatial boundaries that were tested when new children tried to enter an established social territory. The need to created specific boundaries allowed for the development of socialization. But, many students in this study continued to demonstrate social community entry behaviors in their attempt to be part of a cohesive unit. Due to the small class size in this developmental kindergarten class, a rejected peer had limited options for trying to establish a social community with other peers. When that occurred, the student isolated himself from other group members because his repeated attempts to enter a social community have been rejected. Self-isolation took the form of a rejecting statement to his peers. It also took the form of protective body language that physically separated himself from the rejecting group. The ability of at-risk students to use self-isolation in order to protect their self-esteem from peer rejection was

demonstrated in the following transcription.

Contextual Information: The teacher and her students have been reading a story from an oversized book which the teacher has placed on the table. The students are seated in chairs which are parallel to the teacher's chair. P is sitting at his desk and looking at a book on cars. Occasionally, he stands up and looks over at his peers who are sitting in chairs.

Teacher		Students	
Nonverbal	Verbal	Nonverbal	Verbal
1. Teacher looks at P who is standing next to his desk.	1. P, will you bring your chair to reading ? We'll scoot over. We'll make room	1. P looks at the teacher and faces his desk. He grabs his chair and begins to move it. He then stops.	
2. Teacher walks toward students. Teacher places hand between J and B's desk	2. J, could you scoot a little that way ? And B. could you scoot a little that way ?	2. J moves to his right and kicks his feet out.	
3. Teacher holds J's chair.	3. J, could you move a little more ?	3. J covers his face and looks down.	3. J: No.
4. The teacher is holding J's arm and is moving his chair to the right.	4. Stand up and move your chair.	4. J folds his arms and drags his feet.	4. J: No !

Contextual Information: The teacher has been moving chairs to make room for P. Another female student verbally resist her request. P has turned his back to his peers. The teacher walks over to P's desk.

Teacher		Student	
Nonverbal	Verbal	Nonverbal	Verbal
5. Teacher is holding P's shoulder.	5. Come on P. You join us. Now you're not reading your car book anymore.	5. Students who are sitting in their chairs turn around an look at P.	5. P makes noise
6. Teacher is holding P's shoulder and positioning her face in line with P's	6. Come on, join us P. P, look at me! On your chair. There. Go... to... the reading group.	6. P is turning his face away from the teacher.	6. P: I'm staying here!

In this setting, a social community has been established by the students who have been partaking in a reading activity over a period of time. The establishment of a social community had occurred through visual monitoring, proximity and mirroring movements that have created a cohesive unit within the context of a reading lesson. The teacher in attempting to let P enter into an established social community created a disruptive atmosphere. This disruption occurred when P who wished to join the reading group, was rejected by his peers. The difficulty that the teacher had in making a space for P created a situation where P had to salvage his self-esteem. He accomplished this by making noise

noise and turning his back away from the group of students who rejected him. The students demonstrated who rejected him. The students demonstrated their response through mirroring movements that involved placing their hands over their ears and visual monitoring the disruptive student. Eventually, P ran out of the classroom only to return when the reading lesson was finished.

Student separation can take place when demonstrated behaviors are gender specific. Unwritten rules that are often established within a social community can at times become gender specific. The establishment of gender specific social communities within an at-risk kindergarten class can occur at the beginning or ending of a lesson. The students may choose to initiate a social group that is gender specific. In addition, the transition into another activity may force students to demonstrate gender specific behaviors. This is demonstrated by the following transcription.

Contextual Information: The reading lesson has ended. The teacher ask the students to move their chairs to their desks. She then states that they are going to practice a song. K and S raise their hands to show that they wish to participate. P shakes his head and says, "not me". W states that he wishes to sing also.

In this situation, the reading lesson has been concluded and the teacher attempts to engage her students into singing a song. Initially, two female students, K and S and one male student, W state their one male student, W state their willingness to participate. P, a male student decides not to join. The teacher encourages B, a female student to sing with the group while J, a male student demonstrates proximity movement towards K and S. K, S, B, and J are standing in line on the rug when the teacher walks over to the table and proceeds to turn on the record. At that point, J makes eye contact with W and ask W if he is going to work on his reading journal. W smiles at J. J makes a proximity movement toward W and P who have take their reading journals to their desk and begin to work independently. The record is now playing and the three female students B, K, and S begin to sing the words in the song using uniform statements along with the teacher. The three male students, J, P, and W continue to work at their desks on their journals.

This study determined that the formation of gender specific social communities usually would occur prior to or after a teacher directed instructional activity. The formation of gender specific social communities was

difficult to maintain within the context of an instructional lesson.

The Different Agendas of At-Risk Students and Their Teacher

During the formation of a social community formation, instructional conflicts may occur between the teacher and her students. These instructional conflicts may be due to the fact that during an instructional reading lesson, both the teacher and her students are trying to accomplish different goals. Because their methods to facilitate goal accomplishment are in disagreement, conflict may eventually occur in the context of an instructional reading lesson. This conflict due to seemingly dissimilar agendas is made apparent in the following transcription.

Contextual Information: B, S, and W are sitting in their respective chairs and listening to the teacher's direction during an instructional reading lesson. S attempts to invite B into a social community by making eye contact with her and lifting up her dress.

Teacher		Student	
Nonverbal	Verbal	Nonverbal	Verbal
	1. Ok, here we go. We're going to do it one more ...	1. S looks at B and lifts up her dress.	1. S: My shorts are falling down.
2. looks at S's shorts.	2. Your shorts are very nice.		

3. Here... Here are the two phrases.	3. S is standing and looking at B.	3. S: My shorts.
4. That we're going to cut apart, Ok ?	4. B is sitting down and lifts her dress.	4. S: Yeah we both are red.

Contextual Information: S continues to look at B and takes off her sweater. She states that it's hot. B also takes off her sweater. Both students get up from their chair and place their sweater on a separate hook. They both return back to their seats.

Teacher		Student	
Nonverbal	Verbal	Nonverbal	Verbal
		1. W looks at S.	1. W: I wonder why S and me have the same color hair.
		2. B looks at at S. B gets up from her chair and moves next to S.	2. S: But, its something different me and B. We both are twins.

Teacher		Student	
Nonverbal	Verbal	Nonverbal	Verbal
		3. B looks at W and points to her arm.	3. B: Cause ... see. Got short sleeves
		4. W looks at B.	4. W: Hey, that's my chair.

5. Looks at B.	5. Ok, are we ready?	5. B moves back to her former chair.

In this situation, S attempted to form a social community with B by using eye contact to get B's attention. B's acceptance of S's invitation was demonstrated through mirroring movements. Mirroring movements took the form of repeating the gestures of S. Thus, B lifted her dress and remove her sweater in order to mirror the movements of a peer that she wanted to form a social community with. W attempted to enter into this social community through a personal commonality statement that was directed at S. W's statement that he and S had sleeves may have indirectly served to further strengthen the social community between S and B. And at the same time, it may have assisted W's entry into their social community. In addition, S extended W's commonality statement by stating that she and B were twins. This may have demonstrated that she acknowledged W's acceptance into her social community.

Because B is sitting one chair away from her peers, she attempts to strengthen the social community by moving from her chair and sitting in a chair that is next W and S. The teacher realizes that B has changed seats. She stops the lesson to manage what she perceives to be a disruption

to the reading lesson. When the teacher states, " Are we ready ? " to B, she is signaling that B must move back to her prior chair before the lesson can continue. B understands the teacher's statement and returns immediately back to her original seat. Thus, the teacher's agenda to complete the reading lesson without disruption, is restored. Conversely, B's attempt to form a more cohesion social unit is temporally halted.

The previously described social community that was formed in the context of an instructional lesson developed conflicts because both the teacher and students had seemingly different agendas. The teacher's agenda was for the lesson's objective to be successfully completed in a specific time period. The students agenda was to form social communities in order to feel secure as well as to remain motivated and focused while being taught during an instructional reading lesson. The following chart demonstrates where the breakdown of social community formation took place when conflict occurred between the agenda of the teacher and her students.

Insert Table Two

Table 2

Agenda Differences Between Teachers and Students During Social Community Formation

Condition	Agenda Type	
	Student	Teacher
1. Antecedent	Reciprocal behaviors occur within a group.	Reciprocal behaviors are viewed as disruptive.
2. Behavior	Reciprocal behaviors are established through visual, verbal and gestural behaviors.	Teacher verbally reprimands the students.
3. Consequence	A social community is maintained among peers.	Teacher separates the students.
4. Effect	Peer learning and and group motivation are facilitated and maintained.	Lesson is stopped by the teacher to manage disruptive behavior of the students.

In conclusion, as long as the teacher is unaware of her student's need for social community formation, lesson breakdowns may continue to occur. Overtime, social community breakdown may create students who over time become less motivated and willing to learn from an instructor who is frequently interrupting a lesson in order to discipline her students for their perceived disruptive behaviors.

Discussion

Social communities that are sustained enable students to focus more clearly on the classroom instruction. Formed and sustained communities enable the students to better monitor the teacher's behavior in order to receive feedback pertaining to their effort or feedback pertaining to the correctness of their answer. In forming social communities, problems may occur for at-risk students who may be viewed by the teacher as being temporarily off-task or non-compliant. These problems may occur because the two groups have seemingly different agendas. The at-risk kindergarten student must establish a social community within a group of peers in order to feel secure in an instructional setting. The teacher is not monitoring the student's attempt to form social communities. She is trying to establish her own agenda. That is, to successfully get through the lesson with as few

interruptions as possible. Consequently, in attempting to complete a lesson, the teacher may unknowingly physically or verbally disconnect a social community. When that occurs, the lesson may break down because the students need for group cohesion are not met. This breakdown may cause the teacher to suspend instruction and manage inappropriate behaviors. This is done in an attempt to salvage the lesson. In many instances, it may be too late. Inappropriate behaviors may be demonstrated when cohesive social groups that have been established for learning purposes are dismantled by the teacher. The teacher who is unaware of her student's need to establish these kinds of groups, may try in vain to re-establish her own agenda. Because, she has disrupted the agenda of her students, her lesson may unravel with there being no way to salvage it.

Prior group cohesion studies have not determined whether a specific number of students have had a positive or negative effect on social community formation. This may have been due to the studies focusing on the teacher as the facilitator of group cohesion. In addition, group cohesion was usually examined in regular classrooms where there was a larger number of students. For at-risk kindergarten

students, group cohesion becomes more dynamic. Due to a smaller class size, there are less students to establish cohesive groups with. Consequently, special education teachers or elementary teachers who use small groups during some part of their instructional lesson must be aware of social community formation and its relevance. Teachers must balance their need for successful lesson completion with their student's need to feel a sense of security. In addition, student conversations that occur during social community establishment may be important for at-risk students who are modeling the academic discourse of the teacher (Cazden, 1988). Consequently, past oppositional behaviors that have been demonstrated by at-risk or exceptional students during an instructional group activity may have to be reinterpreted by the teacher. Reinterpretation of the student's nonverbal and verbal behaviors may decrease instructional breakdowns and increase instructional learning for students who are educationally at-risk. More qualitative research in the effective facilitation of social community formation is warranted. It is hoped that through further research, behaviors of at-risk students will not be automatically judged as oppositional in nature. Verbal and nonverbal behaviors of at-risk and exceptional students may have to be studied and reinterpretated in

order to effectively facilitate their cognitive, social and educational development in the special education or mainstreamed classroom.

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